

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) For use with a valve stem assembly, a snap-in grommet, the grommet comprising:

a grommet body comprising;

a nose section at a first end of the grommet body, the nose section having a substantially conical shape to provide for insertion of the grommet body into an inflation hole of a vehicle wheel rim;

an annular section at a base of the nose section, the annular section projecting radially outward from the base of the nose section;

a cylindrical section sized to match the inflation hole and having a first end adjoined to the annular section;

a flange section projecting radially outward from a second end of the cylindrical section; and

an axial bore passing centrally through the grommet body; and

an integral sleeve located within the grommet body bore, the sleeve having an outer surface configured to match the grommet body bore, and having a bore configured to receive a valve stem;

wherein the integral sleeve has a length configured to limit compression of the grommet body during installation of a retention nut to the valve stem.

2. (currently amended) The grommet of claim 1 wherein ~~the integral sleeve has a length configured to limit compression of the grommet body during installation of a retention nut to the valve stem~~ at least one interface seal is formed on a surface of the flange section opposite to the cylindrical section.

3. (original) The grommet of claim 1 wherein the grommet is retained in the inflation hole by compression of the annular section against an outside surface of the wheel rim and compression of the flange section against an inside surface of the wheel rim.

4. (currently amended) The grommet of claim ~~[[1]]~~ 2 wherein ~~at least one interface seal is formed on a surface of the flange section opposite to the cylindrical section,~~ the at least one seal is implemented as a hemispherical projection located concentrically about a center axis of the grommet and configured to interface with a substantially flat surface of a flange of the valve stem.

5. (original) The grommet of claim 1 wherein the integral sleeve is implemented using one of a high temperature plastic, aluminum, brass or copper.

6. (original) The grommet of claim 1 wherein the integral sleeve comprises a separate component inserted into the bore.

7. (original) The snap-in grommet of claim 1 wherein the grommet body is over-molded over the sleeve.

8. (original) The grommet of claim 1 wherein an outer surface of the integral sleeve comprises at least one of at least one ridge extending in a longitudinal direction relative to the sleeve, cross-hatchings and knurling.

9. (original) The grommet of claim 1 wherein the grommet body comprises a synthetic rubber.

10. (original) A method of reducing air leakage at a vehicle tire valve stem and grommet assembly, the method comprising:

inserting a snap-in grommet into an inflation hole in a vehicle wheel rim, wherein the grommet comprises a grommet body having;

a nose section at a first end of the grommet body, the nose section having a substantially conical shape to provide for insertion of the grommet body into an inflation hole of a vehicle wheel rim;

an annular section at a base of the nose section, the annular section projecting radially outward from the base of the nose section;

a cylindrical section sized to match the inflation hole and having a first end adjoined to the annular section;

a flange section projecting radially outward from a second end of the cylindrical section; and

an axial bore passing centrally through the grommet body; and

an integral sleeve located within the grommet body bore, the sleeve having an outer surface configured to match the grommet body bore and having a bore configured to receive a valve stem; and

inserting the valve stem through the sleeve bore of the snap-in grommet from an inside of the vehicle wheel rim to an outside of the vehicle wheel rim; and

tightening a retaining nut assembly onto a threaded portion of the valve stem from the outside of the vehicle wheel rim, wherein the tightening compresses a substantially flat surface of the flange section opposite the first end against a substantially flat surface of a flange of the valve stem.

11. (original) The method of claim 10 wherein the integral sleeve has a length configured to limit compression of the grommet body during the tightening of the retention nut assembly to the valve stem.

12. (original) The method of claim 10 wherein at least one interface seal is formed on a surface of the flange section opposite to the cylindrical section, the at least one seal implemented as a hemispherical projection located concentrically about a center axis of the grommet and configured to interface with a substantially flat surface of a flange of the valve stem.

13. (original) The method of claim 10 wherein the snap-in grommet is inserted into the inflation hole of the vehicle wheel rim from the inside of the wheel rim, until the annular section of the grommet passes through the outside of the wheel rim.

14. (currently amended) For use with a valve stem assembly, a grommet, the grommet comprising:

a grommet body comprising:

a nose section at a first end of the grommet body, the nose section having a substantially conical shape to provide for insertion of the grommet body into an inflation hole of a vehicle wheel rim;

a cylindrical section disposed adjacent ~~having a first end adjoined to and~~ having a larger diameter than the nose section;

a flange section that projects radially outward from the surface of the second end of the grommet body and is disposed adjacent to the cylindrical section;

an axial bore passing centrally through the grommet body; and

an integral sleeve located within the grommet body bore, the sleeve having an outer surface configured to match the grommet body bore and a bore configured to receive a valve stem.

15. (original) The grommet of claim 14 wherein the integral sleeve has a length configured to limit compression of the grommet body during installation of a retention nut to the valve stem.

16. (original) The grommet of claim 14 wherein the grommet is retained in the inflation hole by compression of the flange section against an inside surface of the wheel rim.

17. (original) The grommet of claim 14 wherein at least one interface seal is formed on a surface of the flange section opposite to the cylindrical section, the at least one seal implemented as a hemispherical projection located concentrically about a center axis of

the grommet and configured to interface with a substantially flat surface of a flange of the valve stem.

18. (original) The grommet of claim 14 wherein the integral sleeve is implemented using one of a high temperature plastic, aluminum, brass or copper.

19. (original) The grommet of claim 14 wherein the integral sleeve comprises a separate component inserted into the bore.

20. (original) The snap-in grommet of claim 14 wherein the grommet body is over-molded over the sleeve.